



Fact Sheet #6

October 2004

WHAT

Quality control (QC) and training are the key to ensuring that DAWN data are an accurate portrayal of drug-related emergency department (ED) visits for a facility. These data are used by hospitals and public health authorities at the local and national level to guide decisions on services, programming and policies. DAWN data must be correct and complete.

QC procedures require the cooperation and support of each DAWN facility. QC requires access to medical records that have already been abstracted for DAWN, space where the QC can be performed, and the time for the reporter to receive additional training to address problems afterward if necessary.

WHERE

QC visits take place in the hospital. A senior reporting specialist/trainer will re-abstract at least 200 charts and will need space to accommodate this work. Space will also be needed to conduct a re-training of the reporter usually the next day.

WHO

All DAWN reporters are subject to QC review, whether they are hospital staff, independent, or working for Westat. When they come on-board, reporters must complete the Computer-based Training Tutorial (CBTT) before they can begin reporting. Then, DAWN provides on-site training in their facility. Approximately 90 days after they begin reporting, Westat will conduct QC to ensure that they are performing appropriately.

WHY

Since hospital medical records are different in each facility, training and QC must be done on-site. The primary focus for QC is to determine whether all ED

QUALITY ASSURANCE: KEY TO GOOD DATA

cases related to recent drug use were identified as DAWN cases, and, conversely, whether those identified as DAWN cases were actually DAWN cases. The reporting specialist will re-abstract the records to compare how well the reporter did and will work with him/her to correct any problems.

HOW

QC Protocol. The QC protocol needs the following support from the facility:

- At least **200 charts**, or one complete day's volume of ED charts if more than 200 visits, that have already been abstracted by the reporter; Westat staff can assist in pulling the charts if necessary;
- **Space** for the QC specialist to sit while re-abstracting the charts;
- At least 6 hours of the **reporter's time** on the following day for reviewing any errors or problems found as a result of the QC; and
- **Second QC** within 45 days if the reporter fails.

Common Problems.

Not enough time. It is often difficult for reporters to keep up with DAWN reporting on a part-time basis. Westat experience shows that it takes a full-time person to abstract approximately 200 cases per day. Even half that number can be difficult for someone who is already doing other work in the ED.

Not enough training. DAWN has updated its CBTT, reference materials, and training protocols, including on-site training, to be sure that reporters get the best training on DAWN from the beginning.

For more information. Questions should be directed to the Facility Relations staff at Westat at **800-FYI-DAWN**.